

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 13, 2001    CONTACT: Nikki Horner  
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NASHVILLE -- The clock is ticking for those Tennesseans who have not passed all five parts of the state's General Education Diploma (GED) test. As of January 1, 2002, the GED test will undergo a complete facelift, and previously passed sections will not qualify for the new GED, Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development Michael E. Magill announced today.

"With the new test taking effect at the first of the year, it is important that all Tennesseans who still have parts to pass to get into the GED class," Magill said. "Our offices are working hard to help any and all Tennesseans finish up the exam."

Sweeping changes in the GED exam will reflect the most up-to-date, widely used secondary school curriculum standards. As with previous GED tests, the new test will cover the core academic areas of language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics and will continue to measure the outcomes of a four-year program of secondary school education.

Developed by committees of professional educators and test specialists in each subject area, the GED tests were administered to graduating high school seniors to establish a passing standard. Those who obtain scores high enough to earn the GED diploma outperform at least one-third of today's high school graduating seniors.

The new test will cover more realistic tasks with which the adult learner has had considerable experience. The situations are natural rather than contrived and deal with the world of work, the consumer, technology, and family experiences.

Major changes in the exam include:

- Changes in Language Arts Essay scoring from a 6-point scale to a 4-point scale with an increased emphasis on organization;
- Business-related documents and adult-context information texts across all five tests;
- Heavier emphasis on graphs, charts, and map interpretation in Social Studies;
- Inclusion of at least one excerpt from the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers, or a landmark Supreme Court decision in the Social Studies test;
- Addition of space science and environmental science on the Science test;
- Alternative formats on the Math test including graphing answers;
- Use of a scientific calculator allowed on Part I of the Math test but not on Part II; however, candidates must complete both parts of the test to earn a score.

To prepare for these changes, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development has established a GED 2002 Training Network in order to reach all GED teachers in the state. These trainers were selected based on a proven track record of successful GED instruction and high GED pass rates, as well as having shown a superior ability to deliver quality staff development activities.

Registration for the exam will take place in Adult Education Offices all across the state September 17-22. For more information on the GED or to find the nearest testing center, please contact the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Office of Adult Education at 1-800-531-1515.

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